

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4825

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 18526

LIMDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VT, CZ

SUBJECT: VATICAN-CZECH DISCUSSIONS

1. VATICAN PARTICIPANT IN VATICAN-CZECH DISCUSSIONS HELD  
DEC. 10-13 IN ROME HAS TOLD US THAT THERE WAS COMPLETE DEADLOCK  
ON PRINCIPAL ISSUES DISCUSSED AND THAT UNLESS THERE IS INITIATIVE  
ON PART OF CZECHS SIGNALLING SOME BREAKTHROUGH, THERE IS NO PRESENT  
VATICAN INTENTION TO CONTINUE REGULAR CONTACTS.

2. PRINCIPAL ISSUES DISCUSSED AT FOUR-DAY TALKS WERE NOMINA-  
TION OF BISHOPS, EXISTENCE OF CLANDESTINE CHURCH IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA,  
ACTIVITIES OF EMIGREE CZECH CATHOLICS AND PRIESTS IN WEST, AND  
RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION. ACCORDING TO VATICAN SOURCE, CZECHS WERE  
ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO ANY CONCESSION UNLESS VATICAN WOULD COME  
FORTH WITH EFFORTS TO SILENCE CLANDESTINE CHURCH IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA  
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AND STATEMENTS BY EMIGREE CZECH CATHOLICS. VATICAN INSISTED THAT

IT IS UNAWARE OF WHO CONSTITUTES CLANDESTINE CHURCH IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THAT IT HAS NO POWER TO CONTROL ACTIVITIES OF EMIGREE CZECHS IN WEST. THUS, DESPITE ARUOUS DISCUSSIONS IN WHICH "FONMIN" CASAROLI PERSONALLY PRESENTED VATICAN CASE, AND DESPITE LAST MINUTE WORD TO CONFEREES ON FRIDAY FROM FONMIN CHNOUPEK THROUGH AMBASSADOR TO ITALY (FOLLOWING BRIEF MEETING AT AIRPORT) TO MAKE PROGRESS, DR. KAREL HRUZA, DIRECTOR OF SECRETARIAT FOR ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS, COULD NOT AGREE ON ANY ISSUE UNDER DISCUSSION BECAUSE HE LACKED INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

3. VATICAN ORGAN "L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO" SO FAR HAS NOT MADE ANY REFERENCE TO DISCUSSIONS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE. VATICAN SOURCE SAID THAT THIS REPRESENTS VATICAN DECISION TO DENY EXPLOITATION OF ANY MATERIAL BY THE GOC FOR HOME CONSUMPTION. THE VATICAN PRESS SPOKESMAN, HOWEVER, ON DEC. 16 TOLD PRESS THAT DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD DEC. 10-13, " IN A FRANK AND OPEN ATMOSPHERE," BETWEEN DELEGATIONS OF THE VATICAN AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THE ONLY OTHER STATEMENT HE MADE WAS THAT THE TWO DELEGATIONS HAD MANIFESTED THEIR GOOD WILL TO ARRIVE AT SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS DISCUSSED AND THAT IT WAS DECIDED THAT "DISCUSSIONS WILL BE RESUMED IN PRGUE WITHIN A PERIOD OF TIME WHICH WILL BE FIXED BY COMMON AGREEMENT."

4. COMMENT: WHILE IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT THE PRESENT CZECH GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN THE MOST ANTAGONISTIC OF EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TOWARDS THE CHURCH, THE VATICAN IS PARTICULARLY DISAPPOINTED THAT AFTER 12 YEARS OF TALKS AND DISCUSSIONS THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI, AS REGARDS BASKET III, HAS NOT PERMEATED CZECH RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN.VOLPE

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